

Interview with Mrs. Ceclia Tomson  
Conducted by Dr. James L. Dodson and Miss Paula Boyer

Conducted November 10, 1976

TAPE #1

DODSON: Now I wonder if, Mrs. Tomson, you would give us your full name for our record and tell us how long you've lived here in the valley?

TOMSON: Ceclia Tomson and I came out the last part of 1917. It was just before Christmas.

DODSON: I see. Did you go to schools here in the valley then?

TOMSON: No, I must have been 20 years old at least, 19 or 20 years old. My daddy was...he ran a shop until the boys had to go in the service and he ran this shop for them while they were in the service. \_\_\_\_\_ I got kind of lonesome and I went up and worked in the Organ Factory in Van Nuys and that was in the early part of 1918.

DODSON: I see so you came out just at the conclusion of the war then, is that right? Or the war would have been still going on.

TOMSON: It was still going on, the war was. Because I know when I was going with the young man that I married and we went to the beach and celebrated that and I had been

going with him about a year then. So that war wasn't quit then because we celebrated -- they declared peace and we went down the beach and we had a celebration. We danced and we had a good time.

DODSON: Well, that's fine. Do you remember clearly then the Armistice in 1919 and how it was celebrated here.

TOMSON: I sure do. Well, they really celebrated. I tell you something. He had an old poor Packard, one of those...like an old Cadillac and the old battery's on the outside of the car...he had...you don't remember that either do you? No. But anyway, it flew off and we was having such a good time. We went quite a little ways before we stopped to get the thing back on and it ate my whole skirt off in front, because the acid of the battery. And so we went down to the dance hall and we had such a good time I didn't know that till I had two or three dances. It had taken my skirt.

DODSON: You must have been the life of the party dressed like that.

TOMSON: Well, I sure was. I was embarrassed when I thought about it. It was a great celebration, I'll tell you that. It was wonderful.

BOYER: Where was this dance hall.

TOMSON: In Venice.

BOYER: In Venice, down at the beach. And were you living in the valley at the time?

TOMSON: Yeah, Pop and I had an apartment up here.

BOYER: Up here in North Hollywood? And you all got in a car...did a lot of people go down to the beach at that time.

BOYER: Yes. Oh gosh honey, we celebrated -- It wasn't just from here, but it was all over. People went to the beaches and danced and drank. I didn't. I got a good time without that. If I had drank I'd never had known about my skirt.

DODSON: Was going to the beach as popular then as it is now would you say?

TOMSON: Well, it was more pleasure. It was not crowded like it is now. You could take your camp down. When I was working at the Organ Factory the girls I worked with, we use to go down there with our tent and stay all night. On Saturday, in the night, wasn't scared or



nothing. Nobody bothered us. There was six of us and we go at the hall. We use to go...one of the girls had a mother down there and we use to go to her place and we'd clean up, wash up you know, and go to the dance. Oh, we had just a lovely time. But nowadays it's not too much pleasure any more. It's so crowded. I haven't been down there for a long time. But anyway, Brock and I lived in an apartment in a house. We had an upstairs apartment and we had...there wasn't any Catholic church and I'm Catholic. The priest...we use to go down to Hollywood to church. So finally one of the priests said, "Would you come over here, if somebody would fix the organ for them and get it ready." So we could have mass in the morning and I volunteered and I use to do that. Even if I had a date that night I had to fix my -- go out and bum some flowers off the neighbors or something and I'd fix that alter and the father, he'd come over 7:00 in the morning and there'd be from 8 to 10 people, maybe 12. But there wasn't very many people and they'd come over to mass. And then after mass, Pop and I we'd get in our car and we'd go for a trip. He was a great person to go with me and we had a lot of fun. But it wasn't...oh my goodness, in North Hollywood where the Steins Mortuary is now, was a...

DODSON: Where would that be located?



TOMSON: You don't know. It's on Magnolia. It's...I can't tell you...my doctor's, cause they live right across the street from the doctor that I go to. But anyway, they had nothing but an old...you could buy big quantities of stuff. Sacks of 100 lb. sugar, 100 lb. wheat and there was all things like that see. You use to get -- of course Pop and I didn't need that, we just had an apartment but that was that store. And then there was another little grocery store, it didn't amount too much, that was about two or three buildings from the corner of Chandler and Lankershim and right across the street from there was our Post Office.

DODSON: Was the Weddington Brothers store in existence then or do you remember?

TOMSON: Yes, I danced with them. The Fred Weddington's brother. Yeah, I knew both of them. And he died. And Fred went to school with my husband. They were the same age. He died first and then my hubby died four years ago now. But it was quite a thing. I was trying to think what our old policeman's name was, the sheriff was. Did you find out? Did Ms. Cass know that?

DODSON: I don't think we asked her.

TOMSON: I would love to know that. And I kind of wondered if my crippled brother would remember it up north but he was quite a friend to the Tomson's. One time he was overloaded with his well rigs, he was drilling wells, you know. And he was over loaded with his well rigs and the old sheriff come along and he, "Now, you know Leffard, you shouldn't do that." And Leff says, "No, I know it sheriff." "Aw well now, go on get going." And he got going. That's the way it was those days but you don't see that these days.

DODSON: Now, you mentioned going over to Hollywood to church, was there no Catholic church in North Hollywood when you came out.

TOMSON: Oh no. There was nothing. Right here where I am now, there's nothing here. But they had 15 acres of walnuts. And had peaches and things and apricots and things like that. Mother use to pick the peaches and I'd put them on a trailer and go down on the road and sell them for her. Boy, I was the best little old seller you'd ever seen. The guy across the street, he didn't get rid of his peaches but I did. Mother just knew just how to pack 'em, you know, make them look neat. And mine go. ?

DODSON: You remember what they sold for at that time, the price of peaches?

TOMSON: A dollar and a quarter.

DODSON: Was that for a bushel?

TOMSON: No, that's just for a big box. And were all beautifully laid in that box, because my mother-in-law did that.

DODSON: I was just curious how the price then would compare with the price now?

TOMSON: They would run from...of course the guy across the street he sold them cheaper. But we got a little more. We got 10 or 15 cents more. \$1.25 or maybe sometimes if they weren't quite as large, maybe \$.90 but around that neighborhood.

DODSON: You don't know what a box would weigh?

TOMSON: 30 lbs.

DODSON: 30 lbs. for a \$1.25. I see. Well, they were considerably cheaper then.



TOMSON: Oh God, they were beautiful too. Oh yes. My God, what would you get for \$1.25 now?

BOYER: One or two. What street was this that you went over and sold on? What was the name?

TOMSON: Lankershim.

BOYER: Lankershim. What was it like? A dirt road then?

TOMSON: Well, it wasn't a dirt road but it was close to it. It was narrow, very narrow and the only road coming up from...through North Hollywood. Just a little, very narrow, for two cars. But out here one day I was selling peaches and here come two cops and I had my peaches on a great big long bed, 30 boxes. And he'd come up and says, "Hi," and I said, "Hi officer." And he said, "Where you getting them peaches?" And I said, "Right off the place here." And he said, "Well, have any luck?" And I said, "Yeah." And he said, "You know you're going to have to move." And I said, "Oh no." He says, "Yes." And I said, "How about a box of peaches?" And he says, "Sounds kind of good." I give him a box of peaches and I drove around the block and parked at the same place and finished selling my peaches. Oh they were different then they are now.

Nowaday they just cut your throat for a nickel, you know. But they didn't then. They were pretty nice.

DODSON: Do you think the law operated a little more informally in those days.

TOMSON: Doctor, I think so. Of course I was young and full of life too. And my mother use to say, "I don't know Cecila." I could sit out there and they don't come by me. I only had to get one stop and they'd come up and they wanted what's going on, you know. And I sold to them more if I hadn't knocked off a nickel or a dime. I'd sell them 2 or 3 boxes.

DODSON: I want to apologize to the women's lib for this question but do you think by any chance that you were a young girl that, that had anything to do with it?

TOMSON: It could be a little bit. I don't know. I always was full of fun you know. I said, "I think I can cut up." I like a good time and I was always jolly. And my mother-in-law is such a dear little old soul. Her husband died and finally we built this house we burnt down. Oh, we had a lot of hard luck. Poppa got hurt on one of the well rigs. He broke both his arms. I went out to the rigs and I drilled.

BOYER: Oh you did?

TOMSON: Oh yes, I drilled a lot.

BOYER: Where were these?

TOMSON: I drilled a lot of wells. You'd never believe that one, would you?

BOYER: Where were these wells?

TOMSON: Honey, a lot in this valley.

BOYER: A lot in the valley.

TOMSON: Yes, there was scarcely water and we drilled an awful lot of wells in here and Chatsworth, Lancaster and Palmdale.

DODSON: Now, this is very interesting to find out about the water before...

TOMSON: Honest to God. Well, my son's in the business now.

BOYER: Is he?



TOMSON: We took everything. Poppa's got sold. It was about nine years ago. Poppa didn't feel so good. And I talked him out of it. And we turned everything over to Bill. Now Bill takes care of all the Water Department up here. The other night he was down here...to tell you the truth he's the one who's working on my electric. He wires all the electricity for the wells and everything up there and it was Bill. And his wife got called and I was outside with him and they called a neighbor and they said, "It's a rush deal." One of the mains broke and there's is nobody in the town they depend on but Bill. He's a great big 6'6-1/2", weighs about 225 lbs. Fine, oh he's strong. And people...well, it's frightful...he just seems like he just works himself to death and there's no reason. Bill could retire. But he just...that's why I'm waitin' for him. When he gets out there...he's coming down for my light bill.

DODSON: Well now you found then lots of water here in the valley with your drilling.

TOMSON: Oh goodness, yes. They had to drill. Well, some wells you get 150. Of course his father, he used to drill with a horse. He had a rig. Oh, I can show you a picture of me drilling too. It wasn't easy either. He use to go out to houses like this and he'd drill these

wells. Then when hubby got going then he had it more easy. He had his motor on the rig and everything and he'd drill. And that's I where I drilled the derricks were about 160, 170 feet high and it was a bucket drilling and I did that. Now they have rotary. I never had used a rotary but I've used a bucket I did. And so many people to this day who meets me... I was up to Bill's the other day and a fella came over, Paul Benz, \_\_\_\_\_ and he said, "Remember when you came up and finished drilling our well? We was working 3,000 hogs and we called up and your hubby he was sick and you said, I'll be up." He said, "You'd come up with your overalls on and you dug in and you got three more ? of gravel. And he says, "That was enough." And then he said, "Well, here we are. We're stuck again. We don't no one to put the tank up on the hill." And I said, "I know how to do that." Sure, I had two men because I couldn't lift, you know. But I had two men to roll...a roll is around 100 barrel of tank and they rolled the cable around it and they hooked on their rig and I had a little line and they pulled it up a 100 feet up on the hill. And he come over and both of them kissed me and I felt so funny. He said, "We never will forget you, Ceil" he says. I appreciate it but I felt kind of funny.

BOYER: You use to go all the way to Palmdale too?

TOMSON: Oh yes, honey. Lancaster.

BOYER: That was a long trip then wasn't it?

TOMSON: Oh, it was but we had our truck and we had a rig and they'd tow it up there. And we'd camp out many a time out on the ground. On an old feather bed and a cover over us, Pop and I. It was kind of hard.

DODSON: I suppose there wouldn't be any drilling going on here in the valley for water at the present time would there?

TOMSON: Not right here, no. In Newhall, terrific. That's where Bill was called in the night...that's where he lives. And Bill says, oh it's terrific the way that's built up, up there. And they need a lot of water.

DODSON: I imagine, in fact I've heard that the main thing that closed this valley to annex to Los Angeles was to get water as more people came in there wouldn't be enough water produced in the valley itself. Is this your understanding of it?

TOMSON: I didn't quite catch that now. You mean...as more people settle out here...



DODSON: Well, as more people settled in the valley the amount of water that you could get by drilling wouldn't be sufficient for them. And that was one of the main reasons that the valley had to annex to Los Angeles to get the water from the Owens Valley.

TOMSON: That I could not tell you. I don't know just exactly...but I know they did a lot of drilling in here and up to Moorpark, all the little towns around you know that had any kind of farming. We had our well here when we watered. We had big walnut trees and we'd average around 70...no 7 to 10 tons a year of walnuts.

DODSON: How did you pump your water? Did you have windmills or electric pumps or what?

TOMSON: Electric pumps. There were very few windmills. There is a few but they're mostly up where the wind is blowing hard. You see, the wind isn't blowing up here. You go up to Newhall or Saugus and it blows pretty hard. You go on up farther and it blows harder.

DODSON: This is the first time anyone has talked to us about pumping water here in the valley so we're getting a new light here on this particular thing.

TOMSON: Oh my gracious I could tell you. You see, it takes two to drill a well really unless there just sand buckets. We had the sand buckets and we'd drill and it's got an 18 foot buckets are about this big and it has thing, that goes like this every time you hit it down, she works like that. She catches the dirt, that's what makes the hole. Well, anyway that was sand bucket and Pop would have to go some place or go on another job or something and I'd stand there and I'd drill all alone, which wasn't too safe but when you have a big iron down here and you drop this sand bucket down on this iron and it throws the stuff out you got to suck a little. It throws the rocks and the fluid all out and then you'd put her back. And put her back down the well and then you'd go again.

BOYER: And it just keeps going over and over again? You just keep going down?

TOMSON: You just go deeper and deeper. That day I went up there and helped there and helped Ben's I made 18 feet...I went through two stratas of water. See, whenever you go through that gravel, that's where the water comes in out of the mountains and runs in there and boy, that made them a fine well. They only had to go 18 feet more. A lot of times they'll be drilling and they'll get down maybe 100 to 140 feet and if they

only had gone another 10 feet, they'd a hit it. It lays in stratas you know, this water. And it's quite interesting.

BOYER: Is it very deep here in the valley?

TOMSON: No, I'd say some of the deepest ones would be at 400. Maybe not even that deep, 300, 350.

BOYER: Is that about the distance you used to drill your wells around here, about 300?

TOMSON: Yeah, well lots of them 150. Sometimes they had pretty good wells and you know a lot of people at that time -- it was all mostly private parties that were drilling and they didn't have too much money and the casing cost as much as the drilling. We use to get about \$4.00 a foot.

BOYER: Didn't they put up, like you know, well you put up all like the sidings, the casings, do you mean a well or is it just a big dirt hole?

TOMSON: No, no, no. It was a well, and we'd have iron steel casing. And you put this casing down and we have big jacks that's built...they go down 6 feet deep and they all got great big timbers under there. There hooked on



to this timber and this jack pulls it down. As you're going down making a hole...it works. You'd work your little jiggers on the rig and it pulls it down you see. And of course...

BOYER: And you kept putting more casing around the edges as it went down.

TOMSON: Then you'd put another one. Shove it on down and you'd hit it with a pick. Pluck 'em and you'd put it on down. But that's...now I never did that. But I used to drill just the plain hole and sometimes it would cave in too badly see. And if it was on a job like that I could on down, maybe I'd drill 18, 20 feet. It was more...what do you call this formation? Not rock, but...

DODSON: Gravel or something of that kind?

TOMSON: No, gravel caved in. But it sometimes they get water in this formation too but it was something like that, I'd go on, I could just drill fine. I could make a hole. But I never did attempt...oh, several times I did, but I wouldn't make a habit of pulling the casing down myself. Because you had to have a certain...you couldn't go over a certain pressure. You'd cause trouble. You'd rupture...well tear your casing down.

You'd ruin your well. But I use to help all the time. I was a helper with hubby. We made...we'd always give our helper \$4.00 a day. And I'd save that. And that's how we got a head. Just saving and saving and working and I helped him.

DODSON: Can you explain to us just how the drill operated? How it was powered? How it worked?

TOMSON: Well, it worked with an electric...with a gasoline motor and it had... Well, some had walking beams. But our little, ? it was about...it just had the wheels, big wheel and your cable was on this big wheel and then you have or where your friends up there you'd turn a certain button and that comes down and you drill up and down. It's just a...it's very simple. I mean to me it is because we've had...I never knew anything about wells when I came to California and I met a well driller and that's what I did. I packed the two brothers, they both ? and their all gone now.

DODSON: Well, did they get into the well drilling business as soon as they came out. Your husband?

TOMSON: Yeah, my husband was in it when I met him.

DODSON: I see.

BOYER: His whole family was in it.

TOMSON: Yeah, his whole family. His two brothers worked for the Water Department. They're well known in the Water Department. They're on record. Al was one of the bosses and Cocky drilled for the city and he went...oh we had all kinds of wells down in Los Angeles and all through the country. They're well known, the boys are. Tomsons. And they got it from their daddy. Their daddy was a well driller too. When he first came to California they bought up an acre. Well, I guess it was given to him. I guess they evidentially homesteaded the thing and they drilled a well and mother...he dug the dirt out and they took the old house that they were living in and broke it down and case it.

BOYER: With the house?

TOMSON: With the whole house. And then ? to a ? that's how they lived. That is true and then they got it all down and the first thing you know they had something that was terribly loose and it caved in their little old well and they give up. And they both...and my husband was two years old then. And then they came back down here and then they bought this place. So that's the 15 acres they got it here for \$1,500.



BOYER: And then they raised walnuts, right here and worked with the wells and then later on, what happened? How come they...they decided to sell the property here?

TOMSON: No sweetheart, they practically took it away from us. They came in here and as I said, mother was paying a \$100 a year for taxes.

BOYER: And this was about when?

TOMSON: I met Leff about '20 about 24, 25.

BOYER: 1924, or 1925?

TOMSON: In there...and they came out and voted us into the city and the first bill it jumped from a \$100 to \$3,000 a year in taxes.

DODSON: Oh my goodness. In one year after you annexed it went up that much?

TOMSON: That much. And then that wasn't all they...boy, things started going and going. And they had to put this boulevard in here and that cost us \$16,000. Oh God, I never would forget. We use to pay bonds and Pop left his drilling and mother and daddy...Daddy Tomson wasn't very well. He couldn't work ? Pop and I put everything

we got in them wells, right in and tried to save this place. We couldn't save it, it was going too high. And then they copped out when that was \$9,000... Cahuenga. They got us on that one. And it just kept on going. Honey, we couldn't do no more. We was done. We just lost it. And we sold all these lots down here for \$400 and they we'd pay her for them. It be just \$200 then they'd owe us, so they could go and build. That's how times were. They couldn't get any money and that's the lots too.

BOYER: Each of these lots...are they the same size as they are now?

TOMSON: Yes, ours here is a 144 I think it is by 50 and I own this property over here. Then later on when it went on and on and my father he give me...let's see, how is this now? Anyway, he'd give a \$1,000 for our wedding and had that in this here place here. They'd raised that thing within I'd say 25 years ago, they'd raised that \$1,200 from what we use to get on these. They wanted \$1,200 for that and they was going to put little cottages...freeway's going through and he bought all these little cottages, four of them and they were going to put in here and the back of the cottages was going to face our home here. We couldn't stand that so I went down and asked the guy what he would take and he

said, "I'll take \$1,200." So I went to the bank and got that and we bought that and that's how we built this place here now. But I tell you, it was so sad.

BOYER: Yeah, I could imagine. Why did everybody vote to go on with the city, do you know? I mean did they do a lot of...yeah, well voting, but I mean how did they get out, did they talk to all the people out here? They were people out there trying to get the vote out?

TOMSON: It just didn't seem that way honey. It just seemed like the city wanted us in them that was it. And they just voted us in, that's what they did.

DODSON: It's my understanding it was the water problem that did it. That this valley wouldn't have had enough water.

TOMSON: It could have happened. I don't remember that. ? we were married but we was.

BOYER: Well, this is my own opinion but I think Los Angeles seems to be the people that were basically concerned and Los Angeles wouldn't be the city it was today if it didn't have the water. It would be Owens Valley.

DODSON: You see, Los Angeles was the one that brought the water from the Owens Valley and the others had to come in...



BOYER: Los Angelians decided they wanted you in so they voted and they had enough votes to carry even all the people in the valley voted against it, huh? You didn't have any choice.

TOMSON: Oh, it was a sad thing. I was so sorry for mother. And mother had nothing, had lost the whole business. And she lived with us. 21 years, I always call her Mutsey. She was just a little doll and we took care of her and we buried her and gee, I thought the world of her...I couldn't thought more of her. She's my mother...my mother died when I was 16, 17 years old. She was cute, nice, and I thought so much of her. And Poppa was her favorite son. My husband was.

DODSON: So as we're talking about the annexation of the valley, of Los Angeles, I suppose you've read there is some movement now to take the valley away from the city again. Make it an independent town. Have you heard of that?

TOMSON: Well, Burbank is you know?

DODSON: Yes, Burbank is.

TOMSON: Are they really talking about that?

DODSON: Yes, there has some talk.

BOYER: Van Nuys is and I know that on the last election of course, Canyon County wanted to...

TOMSON: That's where my son is.

BOYER: What did he think about that, do you know?

TOMSON: Yeah, he voted no on it.

BOYER: He voted no? I know it would be...

TOMSON: And he asked me to vote no.

BOYER: Did he? Yeah, I just wondered. Because I know some of it...it will cost money too...to have them believe this.

TOMSON: That's what it's going to be. It's going to raise them something terrible up there. And that's pretty country up there if you like desert. Bill's got a place up there. He moved away from...well, he was between...he was a little bit way out of Newhall, Saugus. It was in Saugus, that's where it was. But are you acquainted up there?

DODSON: A little bit. Not too much.

TOMSON: Do you know where the race track is?

BOYER: Do you mean around Saugus where the rack track is? I know where it is.

TOMSON: Well Bill was just a little ways up, maybe a block off to the left.

BOYER: Yeah, that's Canyon County.

TOMSON: And he rented that and he's moved up to his little mountain home. It's the cutest place you ever seen. It's adorable. Sure, and they've got a big fence clear around. A lawyer come up there...oh, a couple of months ago...offer them an outrageous price for their place. Well, you see he's got 2-1/2 acres and he's got a darling home. And he built practically himself. He's got this water...two jacuzzi'.

BOYER: Jacuzzi.

TOMSON: I can't pronounce that. I needed help. But anyway he has one of them built on to his home. It's all glass, beautiful ferns. His home is adorable and this guy came in there and said, "Bill, what you take for it?"



And Bill said, "It's not for sale." But it's nice up there if you like the desert. But that doggone wind...I never could get use to it.

BOYER: It's hot up there. It's awfully harsh.

TOMSON: And he's got cherry trees and peach trees. He's got 20 cherry trees. My brother from up north sent them down to him for a present. And he's planted them all. Every one...I think he lost two of them.

BOYER: Well, that's pretty good.

TOMSON: And they say, "Oh, you can't raise nothing out there." But you sure can. Yeah, well I don't anything else only that when I was come out here first we only had one show up there and with the guys we'd go to the show and if the guy wasn't drunk we'd see a picture show. And if he was drunk he'd give us our money back.

DODSON: You mean the operator sometimes would be too drunk to run the projection machine.

TOMSON: Yeah. And Suzy Osborne. He was the...he run the Post Office and it was right across...what's on the corner there now? I think there's a drug store there. Where

the drug store is there, on Cahuenga and Lankershim.  
Not Cahuenga, I mean...what I'd say?

BOYER: Magnolia?

TOMSON: No, I just said it a minute ago. I forget, anyway it  
was right there on the corner of Lankershim and...

BOYER: Chandler?

TOMSON: Chandler. Yeah, they had the Post Office there and  
that's where I went in to find out where Poppa was. It  
was 1917.

BOYER: Was the ? still up there.

TOMSON: Yes, oh God yes. And the little whatcha call it is  
still there.

BOYER: Yeah, the little depot.

TOMSON: The little depot is still there.

BOYER: Is that the same one?

TOMSON: Yea, the same one, the same one honey.

And that...how much was ~~over~~ shows then? How much, you know, what did you pay to go see a movie then?

TOMSON: We didn't pay much, a quarter maybe. About a quarter. But oh boy, we'd just come back and get our money. We knew we were going to get it pretty near every time because the old guy half the time he was drunk you know. We'd have to go back and get our quarter out of window. Oh, I'll tell you...this was a little town before. It was nothing.

DODSON: Do you remember the name of that theater? Or the name of the proprietor?

TOMSON: No, I don't remember that. It was right across from the Rathburn's...of course Rathburn's weren't there. There was just only one store and that was right across from the Post Office on that corner. Chandler and Lankershim and across the street was the Post Office.

BOYER: Oh, was that clock building still there?

TOMSON: Oh yeah. Cumpston, no they were pretty well to do. My husband knew them very very very well. They associate quite a bit. I knew seen her too much. She didn't go out a whole lot. But old man Cump...he was standing on the corner one day and that comes to me more than



anything he says, "Hi Cecila?" And I said, "Hi, Mr. Cump." And he says, "How's everything going?" And I'd laugh and say, "Pretty good." He had a gun in his hand, a big gun and I said, "You going hunting?" It was deer season and my hubby always went hunting. And he said, "No, but I bet Leffard is?" And I said, "Yes." You don't see ? "I'm 80 years old and I'm just about done." And I thought, "Aw, come on, Mr. Cump don't be like that." And you know I can see that man standing there, and think I'm getting close to it myself now. I think about the old guy, you know. But anyway...

BOYER: What did they use to sell up there at that store?

TOMSON: He had dry goods store. It was a dry good store. They sold everything in the dry goods. Clothes, not too much. But enough for people to get along. It wasn't very much in this little town, it was just nothing. To tell you the truth.

BOYER: Yeah, it sounds like it was really small.

TOMSON: I knew two or three girls that wanted to go to Hollywood.

DODSON: Now, you were telling us about going to the beach and going to movies. What else did you do for social life in the early days of valley.

TOMSON: After mass on Sunday, my father was a very devoted Catholic, and we get in our little old car, a little old Ford, Model T and we use to go to Ventura and we use go to...and what's the next place...it's such a nice place...Santa Barbara. And we'd go up there and we'd have dinner and we went all around. And one time we went on a seven week trip. We went all up through up north and we had such a good time, Pop and I. He was a great sport. A lot of fun.

DODSON: Wasn't that quite an adventure to travel in a Model T Ford. Did you get break downs and all that?

TOMSON: And then when I got married...my gosh, you know I didn't think we needed two cars so I said...hubby didn't want to give up his. He had a old Pop Hartford. It's like an old time Cadillac, it didn't have no front doors on it. Of course, in those days it was stylish, you know, a nice car. But anyway, I thought I'd sell mine. So oh God, I put a little ad in the paper and I fella came and said, "You got a Ford for sale?" And I said, "Yeah." He said, "How much you want?" I said, "\$250." I gave it \$400, or something, Poppa did. And

he said, "I'll buy it." And I said, "Listen now, I want you to write to me and tell me if that thing is alright?" Cause I said, "I don't want to sell you a bad one, you know." And then you know let me know and I'll make it good. And my father laughed and he said, "Oh Cecilia," and so he wrote to us and he said he got there where he went. He went to...what's the name of that canyon? Anyway, to mine. He was doing mining. And he said that little car just kept on going. Just kept on going. It was one of the old timers you know. When I see them running around here sometimes all painted up, I think, oh my goodness, we use think about his little Ford.

DODSON: Well, did those Model T Fords cost about \$400 new then.

TOMSON: \$410. That's exactly the price. Poppa went down here to Hollywood with me. We bought the darn thing and the guy took me up over the hill and he took me back and said, "Now, get in and drive it." And I had never drove a car.

BOYER: Oh my God.

TOMSON: I drove that son-of-a-gun home. I will tell you, I was a little bit scared. I never will forget that. When my daddy said, "You get in there." Poppa could never



drive. He always ran off the curbs. Always scared me then. He was always getting up against the curbs and bumping and... And he'd toot his horn...toot...toot...you know. My dad was very fashionable in those days. They'd blow their horns.

DODSON: It was pretty easy to stuck in the mud too in those days, wasn't it? Before the streets were paved.

TOMSON: I had one those ? coming over the pass, I'd run out of gas. And now my father said, "Now, don't forget honey now, fill up." Oh I got plenty, I've got plenty. And when I started getting jumping a little bit, I'd think, he's going to get mad at me. And he did. And I use to turn the car around and go backwards. You see it would run the gas into the floor. And he would get so mad. He said, "You know Cecelia, you're should put gasoline in it." You know I would always think I was going to make it. I didn't like to stop and get gasoline.

DODSON: Do you have any recollection of how much gasoline costs in those days?

TOMSON: No, I don't. It wasn't that cheap though. I can't remember that. No, it wasn't cheap. You know, because my brother came out from the east in a Model...was there 8, a Model 8. What was it? It was a horrible

looking old car and there was the two brothers and Joe, with a crippled brother up north. They came out and I knew some towns, he told me that they paid \$.40 a gallon coming out here.

BOYER: Well, that's not cheap.

TOMSON: No. And that was 1920.

BOYER: Yeah, we were still paying that not that long ago. A few years ago.

DODSON: Yes, and when you consider the purchasing power of money at that time, that was a pretty steep price. \$.40 a gallon, yes.

BOYER: That was a lot of money then.

TOMSON: And I heard Joe say that they had a can, a 5 gallon can in the car. Now this coming out from Missouri. And they had a 5 gallon can and whenever they could get it for \$.40 they'd fill that can. Because it was more as they come along. Now here, I could not tell you. I don't really knew...I forgot that. But I remember Joseph talking about here the last time. He says, "Everybody's raving about the gas being so high. That's what I paid when I came from Missouri."

BOYER: You were talking about...I wanted to ask you one thing.  
To back track a little bit. Where was the little  
church that you started? Where you started having  
mass?

TOMSON: After we bought one?

BOYER: Is that what happened? I mean I know you said...

TOMSON: No, we had church in our home.

BOYER: You had church in your home? And had people come over  
your house, then?

TOMSON: Yeah, and I'd get all the chairs in from the porch and  
get the chairs... It was a buffet in the house. And  
then the dining room. ? only I had had a buffet to  
this wall and then I decorate that and put everything  
out for the mass you know. And I have linens like they  
do now. They always have linens on there and I'd take  
care of them and I'd wash them and get them ready,  
fresh for Sunday. And the father would come out and he  
would have mass and then he'd leave and he'd go on back  
to the mass in Burbank. That's where he came from.

BOYER: Oh, he came from Burbank. And then what happened? You  
ended buying the church?



TOMSON: Yeah, then we bought a little Methodist church. Are you acquainted here?

BOYER: Yeah, to an extent, yeah.

TOMSON: You know where Rathburn's place is? Right straight like it's across the street from him where they give jobs now and take care of the Medical and all that junk. That's where there was a little Methodist church there. And we bought that little church. Poppa and the man that had a vineyard. And he had quite a little money and he's an Italian Catholic and between Poppa and him and a few more, they chipped in. And they bought that little building for a song. I use to know what it was but I think they got that for \$3,000. That corner with that little church on there. It was a Methodist. And we had mass in there and then my brother Henry, he got killed. He was going to work down in Hollywood and a colored man hit him with his Dodge and just. He got hit about 6:00 and 9:00 he died. Well anyway, I buried him from that little church. And just a very small little thing. And well, more people were there by this time you know. And we got together. Mrs. Bob Hope and another one that was in the movies...what was her name? Anyway, her and I was on the committee one day and they all, she was a little bit...had a nice home and everybody kind of

looked up to her and so I was working like the dickens you know, getting pies baked and everything and finally Mrs. Hope was in the building cleaning and Mrs. Hope came in and the girls had plan to come a little early and have everything done so she wouldn't have to it. So here she comes with her apron and all on, madder than a wet hen. She said, "Now listen, I don't like this stuff." She said, "Mrs. Tomson, what are you doing?" "Well," I said, "I'll tell you something, we got something to do." She said, "What is it." I said, "Sweep that hall out." We had a long hall. Well, she got in there and her and I we swept it all out. And when I think about it. I'd like to meet her sometime again. They just live right over here. They have...like 2-1/2 blocks. But I never...

BOYER: Is that where they lived before. I mean is that she was coming up to this little church.

TOMSON: I could not tell you that sweetheart. But she always, she belongs to St. Joseph's. He doesn't. He's not Catholic, but he always goes along with her. And here everyone...we were building that new church, the Cathedral up here. While we was raising money you know for school and we couldn't sell it, we had to those paddles. And we couldn't do nothing. We just couldn't. And the congregation was just... So anyway,

I said to one of the girls, "Shoot, wonder if we could get Bob." And they said, "Let's draw straws." And I didn't draw it, though. One of the other girls, she called him. And they said, "Mr. Hope, how about coming over and helping us a little bit." And he said, "What are you doing?" "Oh, we trying to sell paddles." Of course, he'd been living there quite a long time and he goes every place, Palm Springs and he's got a place up here. But he always lands back here. He's back here right now.

BOYER: Is he?

TOMSON: And so he said, "Okay, we'll be over." And here he comes with her. And by God, he jumped over the little things we had. He saw this paddle. He jumped over and got him there and do you know something it wasn't ten minutes, we didn't have no paddles no left. He buy the turkeys and then he'd sell them again. Oh, we had the time of our life. And she was just as cute as he was. Yes sir, he's a very nice person. You know, a lot of people don't like him because they think he's stuck up but he is not stuck up.

DODSON: Well, has he taken much of an interest in the valley and in civic matters here to your knowledge?



TOMSON: Yes. Speaking and doing things, yeah. I went to the Hilton, a big hotel down here?

BOYER: At the new one. The one at the Universal Studios?

TOMSON: You know what's the name of it?

BOYER: It's the Universal Studios motel or hotel isn't it?  
No, it's a Hilton?

TOMSON: Yep, it's a Hilton. I went there for dinner, the 50th year, the church. And they sold books and they said, "Where's your..." She said, we went and got all the particulars from you Cecilia and they didn't get it. They lost it and my name wasn't even in the book and I was the first one there. They ? some little talk about it. But anyway, Bob he entertained then and he's quite nice. He entertains for anybody. I mean for any church or anything that's going on, if he can help you, he helps. He's a pretty nice person.

DODSON: I wish he was interested in our museum. We could stand some help there.

TOMSON: Did you ever approach him?



DODSON: Well, we never really have had any contact with him, that's true.

TOMSON: But he is, as near as I know now. Of course, I don't know too much. But he was out there and so was she. They both appeared. She's a marvelous person. Her hair is snow white, she's very sweet. They adopted quite a few children you know. And they got a little home over here for them right across the street from he is. The darrest colors that you ever seen in your life. I don't know what in the name of God. What's the matter, Bob? He's color blind or something. It's the ugliest color. It's darker than that. Real dark. Just dark...the whole building and the Post Office down there. Everybody talks about it. But that's for one of his kids. Oh it's a nice house, but the color...is terrible looking. I've never seen anything like it. Anything but that color. Everybody always said, "What's the matter with Bob?"

DODSON: Where is that house located?

TOMSON: Right down Moor Street here.

BOYER: It's on Moorpark and what is the street here? Woodbridge?

TOMSON: No, it isn't on Woodbridge, honey. Moorpark, you go right straight down Moorpark and you see it off to the right. That's about 2-1/2 blocks from here, after you get on Moorpark.

BOYER: It's got a great big fence with ivy all over it. I'll have to drive by sometime...he's ?

TOMSON: He's very nice. He was coming down the street one day and I see him and I say, "Hi," and he says, "Hi, how are you?" He is really a pleasant old guy. He's cute.

BOYER: Was he just walking down the street.

TOMSON: Yeah, he was walking down over here. I don't where...he must have had his car parked or something. But he takes her to church and the other one, what's he's name? The one that plays with him so much.

DODSON: Bing Crosby?

TOMSON: Uh, huh. You know they lived up here on Burbank, you know.

DODSON: Oh, did they live here in the valley too?

TOMSON: Oh my God, yes.

BOYER: Oh, I knew that.

TOMSON: Oh, their home was on Burbank and it burnt down. You know he lost his wife with cancer.

BOYER: Uh-huh, the first Mrs. Crosby.

TOMSON: Yeah, I knew her. And he lost her. And then his house burnt down and he had \$2,000 in a pair of shoes and after the house was out, he hunted for them shoes. That \$2,000...he's a character you know. He bought the church from St. Charles. I didn't mean the church, I mean the organ.

BOYER: Oh, the organ, he bought the organ from them.

TOMSON: Uh-huh, from St. Charles and then they took the little organ from there and put it up in the other little church, way up on Lankershim Boulevard, do you know where that is? That little church, it's Mexican. It's a Catholic, Mexican church.

BOYER: I didn't know. It's a little one.

TOMSON: Uh-huh, right on the strip, on the right hand side as you go up. And he put that little organ in there and he put the big one in here for our house. They were

quite the people. No, really I can't say anything about them. But they're nice. And I went over to their...they had a doings over there and the Catholic doings and they had this is his place. Doggone, he's got a pretty place.

DODSON: Oh, does he have a place here in the valley now then?

TOMSON: Oh right over here, yeah.

DODSON: Bing does?

BOYER: She's talking about Bob.

TOMSON: No, I'm talking about Bob.

DODSON: Oh, I thought you were talking about Bing. That's what I thought.

TOMSON: No, he had...and I went to it. It was an entertainment...let's see you paid \$10.00 to get in and you get a little slip of paper...that was \$5.00 and you could go over and get a drink occasionally. I think the drink was \$2.00 or something. They pull one of those little things off. It was very, wonderful, it was really a swell thing. ? at least 20,000 people here. And he'd never come out though. He had



that...oh he's got a swimming pool that's out of the world. And then they had a fashion show there. This has been about 4 years ago. And I was sitting there, you know the first thing you know one guy come over. I was standing up...I didn't have any seat and this movie come on and he said, "Ceclia, if you give me a nice kiss, I'll let you have my chair." "Oh," I said, "That's cheap." So I give a kiss and I sit down and here come two sisters come over from St. Charles and here he comes. He just sits, ? he didn't know what he was doing and he went and walked up to them and he said, "Hi," and she said, "Hello Bill, how are you?" And he says, "I'm fine." He said, "You know, if you'll give me a kiss, I'll get you a chair." And I started laughing, that's what he said to me. And she looked at him you know and she kept looking and she said, "You know, I don't know whether I like you or not." And he's sitting down. It was too cute really. He's just cutting up. And then finally one of the gals, oh God, they had some beautiful clothes parading around this big pool and finally one of the gals come along and put their arm around me and they all thought that I was the mother of this girl and she was a doll, no kidding. And she said, "I like you." And I said, "Honey, you're kind of cute too you know." So we were talking there and they thought that I was the mother. So two or three guys come over and they said, "Will you introduce

me to her?" And I said, "I don't know her." "You don't know her? Why she makes over you, she's come over here about two or three times. Every time she's got a new outfit on." They were showing the costumes. Oh, she was a doll. And she came over and put her arms around me like this. And I said, "Oh, isn't she something? Pretty, but the gal that's got it on is just as pretty or prettier." And those guys, they wouldn't leave me alone. They said, "That is your...you our her mother. Give me her address." And all this stuff. This is cute. But we had a lot of fun. In those we had a good time. But Bob never came out. They have guards. They had guards upstairs on the porch and they kept walking around with their guns.

BOYER: Good grief.

TOMSON: Um, policemen you know. They didn't have police suits on but then you could see they were guards.

BOYER: Well, did you live here even during the depression or you weren't here then?

TOMSON: I can't.

BOYER: You don't know. What about the depression in the valley? It seems to me you mentioned earlier that you

know it was really pretty bad because it came the same time the city was annexed and all the taxes went up and then the depression came.

TOMSON: It was bad, honey. It was really bad. We didn't have it so bad because our folks were drilling wells and even if we had to drill them for practically for nothing, they'd be in fields where there'd be potatoes and roast niggers or corn they called it. I was from Missouri, roast niggers, but the corn and onions and all sort of things like that. And they'd say, "Help yourself." Beans, lima beans. The boys would come home with half a bushel of lima beans and I said to him many of times and fixed me lima beans and string beans, they could have all they want. Corn and you know, you'd be surprised, you don't take very much after you eat all your vegetables that you have to have you know. And we helped an awful lot that way. And I use to always tell Leff, I said, "You know, honey you didn't make those things." I'll tell you what he got. Do you remember when they had that terrible wreck down there, that earthquake and Long Beach got hit so hard. Before he used a truck, and two men, no not a man, truck and himself, well timbers and things, big timbers to put back or build up some of them homes. He got \$3.50 a day, that's the wages he got. And we started back together. Things were bad. I knew some people that I



told you. I know a couple up here had a dog and they cooked that thing. That's something. Jesus, but it was hard. But then in those days you get a whole pretty fair steak for \$.35 or \$.40 you know. And chickens, you could get a nice chicken for \$.50 and you could cook that with dumplings or you could cook it with...it helped out a whole lot. It could have been as high as they are now and there'd be a starvation. And they paid the men. Pop paid \$4.00 for a helper and he never did hired a driller because you just couldn't afford it, that's all. Now he's still helping. I mean he's taking that \$4.00 a day and that's true. And that was all through this valley, Antelope Valley. Oh honey, I can show you dozens of wells we drilled up there. Many a time we'd sleep outdoors. We didn't have no truck, trailer. We slept on the porches. The old houses were condemned and they'd have a porch there and Pop and I would get our old feather bed and have one over us and tuck a pillow and then we'd sleep out there. And we'd wake up in the morning and go to work. And then we'd twice a week we'd come home, get clean clothes and see Mutsey, his mamma and she's doing alright down here you know. And we'd go back up and go to work again. Oh, we had hard times, but you just up and wonder and you know you don't mind it. You fight it on through the same as you do now. And I think the people were happier then, really. I mean people that



worked kind of half ways getting along. You seemed to be that nowadays it's all greed and money. Isn't that true. Because I know Bill's got people up there, men working now drilling for him. Because Bill's very well known. If you ever go to Newhall and talk about Big Bill Tomson and they know him. He's wonderful. He does so much for them and so much for poor people.

BOYER: Does he?

TOMSON: Oh my God. I was sitting up there one day and a fella came in it was really so pitiful. And he threw his head down like this and he cried and Bill said, "What in the God's world happened to you?" And he said, "My little girl got killed in an accident last night. Fourteen years old." He said, "Bill, I ain't got a dime or a cent," just like that. And Bill said, "Oh, come on in." And he put his arm around him and hugged him and told him. I don't care. He went over and bought the casket and bought the grave. And he's known to be that way. And he had called, he was drinking, he started, he was coming for Bill and he thought maybe Bill could help him because Bill knows the cops up there a whole lot you know. And he was just pretty close to Bill's house, he went off the road and turned over a couple of times and it just dragged him. Oh, he was dead. And I went to the funeral parlor and I my

husband and I, we couldn't it. We couldn't get in the chapel it was so crowded. And I said, my that man had a lot of friends. And they said, "It's Bill Tomson's friends." One man, he worked for. This guy had a lot of personality and God, he's very fine. Health support. My husband did the same thing. I can remember so well. We could hardly afford it either but as long as you complained to him that she'd have a little water, she'd get that well hooked up and she could rent those three little houses, the little shacks that men were working in that worked in them. And daddy said, "I'll help you." And one guy got in his truck and he pulled his rig over and them things weighed 11 ton and he pulled over and ? and he fixed her well and she said, "How much?" "Aw, that's alright."

BOYER: That's charity, isn't it?

TOMSON: I'm like that too.

DODSON: Did you have a lot of trouble collecting your bills in those days when you did drill wells?

TOMSON: Yes, we did. Quite a number of times. But sometimes Poppa was a little easy too. Yeah, he was that type. I shouldn't be a landlady, I'll tell you that. And I

do the same thing. Well, your just too damn easy,  
that's all.

BOYER: You said that he went down and worked with the  
earthquake in Long Beach. Some of the people have told  
us also and they felt the earthquake up here. Did you  
feel the earthquake here?

TOMSON: No, I didn't feel it. But they say it was. They said  
the earthquake...we had a couple of them...tremors you  
know. But I didn't feel it.

BOYER: You didn't notice it?

TOMSON: Wasn't that in the morning or at night?

DODSON: I'm not sure at what time of the day that one came.

TOMSON: I don't either. But I don't remember. Some of the  
people around there said they felt it, but I did not.

DODSON: Then evidentially you didn't have any damage or  
anything like that.

TOMSON: If it'd shook anything at all I would woke up because I  
wake up awful easy. But if it's at night. But I...I  
didn't see it. But they talked about it. I think

wasn't it suppose to be in the evening. It wasn't evening I think.

BOYER: What about the other earthquakes? Have you felt any more. Some people have felt a couple.

TOMSON: Recently?

BOYER: Yeah, well the recent one that felt in Tehachapi.

TOMSON: Oh, my husband got hurt awfully bad up there.

DODSON: Is that right?

TOMSON: No he's in Saugus.

BOYER: Oh Saugus, you mean...the one in '71?

DODSON: Oh no, you're talking about the Tehachapi quake that hurt him or the Sylmar quake?

TOMSON: The Newhall...when he was up there in Saugus.

DODSON: That was then the 1971 quake then?

TOMSON: Yeah, that he got hurt there. He had, his home was just wrecked. Some things that were sitting on me.



They had an old argument and you know those little stands they have on the side of...jumped from there over and sitting on the table. And it was quite a distance from... Oh it was...and I caught too here. Our property. Our whole...sidewalks and everything cracked and our house was set over about that far. You could see it out... And everything about it. Well, it didn't hurt anything and I just liked to go. I had to test it if there was any danger and then there wasn't. It just seemed like it just kind of moved the family.

DODSON: Well, I think the greatest amount of damage was further north in the valley rather than this far south.

TOMSON: Oh it was terrible. Bill really was hurt but then he said, "It didn't hurt us, mom. We're all alright, that's the main thing." ? all those old houses, you know.

DODSON: Was his house pretty badly damaged.

TOMSON: Yeah, and inside. Oh God, it just threw everything around, honey. It just upset everything. Well, in here...our bed just felt like it was going...tipped like that. We was laying in a table. We weren't up yet. But it didn't hurt nothing. It didn't break

anything. Not even a glass. It was there at Bill's.  
He'd just haul it out in baskets.

DODSON: Has this had any effect on you? Do you fear  
earthquakes now?

TOMSON: Um-hmm. Don't you?

DODSON: Yes.

TOMSON: Yes, I do fear them.

DODSON: But it didn't make you want to go back to Missouri  
again?

TOMSON: You wouldn't want to go back to ? would you?

DODSON: No, I'm going to take my chances on the next one.

TOMSON: Well, those cyclones are bad back there. No kidding.  
I was in one one time. My daddy had a grocery store.  
It was on High Street here and our little home was on  
Mccarthy, just a block down. And we had a big  
beautiful big building and, oh my God, mamma called up  
and said, "Hurry Ceclia, get up here quick." She was  
up at the store. So I had to go through the alley.  
Boy, I was a going like lightning to get up there. I

had to close all the windows in our home. We had a two story and then we had a garret upstairs for the hired men. Field poppies, so we would hire country boys to our delivery. We had delivery wagons with horses, you know. You don't remember those days? ? she said hurry up here, so I hurried. And when I got in outlay was a crash, hit a telephone post and I went down, flatter than a pancake. That's not very nice either. I laid there quite a while before I could get myself together and I got up and mamma was at the back door at the store. Just had to go through the alley through the next block, High Street. And we was waiting for me. She thought something had happened. I was pretty well, I was more scared than anything else. I'll tell you that. I was banged up and I was shaking. I didn't get hurt. It's just it was the bang you know, that knocked me down.

DODSON: I notice all the things you have on your tables in your living room. Now one lady we interviewed has cemented all of her vases down to the top of the table so that the next earthquake won't knock a thing off the table. Of course, she can't move anything now. But at least.

TOMSON: How does she dust in the... One night they was talking about it on the television and I got scared. So I went in to several things I have. My son gets Bill those

things. Every, oh God, well this is the day I went up to go to Las Vegas with him, he give me that diamond ring. He says, "Here mommy, I got something for you." And his little wife. She was so tickled, she was with him to give it to me you know. So we went to Las Vegas. I spent a lot of money up there but I had a good time. I tell you I think it's getting worse up there, don't you? Or don't you go up there?

DODSON: Well, I haven't been there in quite a while.

TOMSON: I got rid of \$400 and I got rid of \$90 so I guess it's kind of bad.

DODSON: Well, you see I have to work too hard for my money. I can't afford to give it away up there.

TOMSON: Oh God, that's something I shouldn't have been giving that away either. I only pay \$200 a month here, so that's kind of bad. But everybody says they got a raise, double. I didn't. They just left...I guess they thought it was high enough. That's for this over here too you know. I got a tri-plex over there. And it's quite a nice building. I was expecting a raise but I'm still paying \$200 a month. That ain't so bad but it's bad enough.



BOYER: Yeah, it's bad enough.

DODSON: Do you know since you've lived here in the valley, what do you think has been the greatest changes that you've seen?

TOMSON: Now, how should I say this. What shall I say for that? I really don't know.

DODSON: Do you think Paula dresses a little differently than you did when you came out in 1920?

TOMSON: Oh my goodness, yes. They dress different. I never wore a pair of tights until my husband passed away four years ago. I just...well I don't think Poppa would like it and I mean my husband I'm talking about. But no, things...they've changed an awful lot. Of course, naturally.

DODSON: Do you think the changes in fashions have been for the good or the bad.

TOMSON: I think it's for the good. What do you think?

DODSON: Well, I have no objection to them but...

TOMSON: Listen, I haven't either. I tell I think let people do what they wanted. It's just like my grandchildren when they come down and kind of shock me. But shucks, everybody do it. Why should I jump on them. That's the truth, isn't it? I don't particularly like them but then, goodness gracious, that's the world now. What are you going to do? If you say something about it and you hurt their feelings. I have four grandchildren and there darling and they have children. My great grandchildren and one of them, she's very, dresses just perfect and the other one, she's a little bit heavier than the other one and she just...the least she can have it, the better she likes it. What can we do? Huh? Isn't that the truth. You say something to them and they hate you. So you might as well go on with it. What do you think about it, doctor?

DODSON: Well, I'm not interviewing me. So I better keep still.

TOMSON: No, I know. But what can we do? I'm not so fond of it, you know what I mean. I feel there kind of gaulle and got a lot of nerve to go out and do like they do. But then what can you do, just...

DODSON: Now you mentioned going out to the beach in 1918, and that's the time of the Armistice. If you went out today would you be shocked at the sort of bathing suits

they wear now? And my little old mother-in-law she use to go out with Fred Wet<sup>11</sup>tington. Did you know him? Fred? She use to go out with Bakeman. Lou Bakeman, they are very well known here in the valley. Well, they were all mother's friends and she use to have her little old bathing suit but it was the cutest little outfit. Even had a little thing here. And down to your knees and I've got pictures of it you know. And I get them out and look at them and of course God you'd put when out and somebody and they'd be shocked, wouldn't they? What kind of one do you wear?

BOYER: A small one.

TOMSON: Smaller than these?

BOYER: No, I'm smaller than that.

TOMSON: And I wouldn't blame you cause the rest of ? might just as well.

BOYER: Everybody does.

TOMSON: It's something else.

DODSON: Then you sort of tolerate the fads and fashions but some of them you don't really care for.

TOMSON: Yeah, I wouldn't care for it for myself. But there the people that enjoy it, let them go through it. I'll look at them, see how they look. You know some of these gals are pretty. Oh we went to a show up there at Las Vegas and my God, it was worth all of it. It was \$17.00 and...they served drinks three times. Was it four then. And I don't care for anything they had. I took a big bottle of soda. They were only about that big. God, I couldn't get away with it but that was a beautiful show. And honey, they practically had nothing on.

BOYER: Yeah, I know. They don't wear very much at all.

TOMSON: Honey, just ? Just a leaf. And you know they come so close to you. And my husband, his boyfriend, ? and his wife was with us. Of course, my hubby was quite a devil you know.



TAPE #2 - SIDE 1 & 2

BOYER: Some people said that there was a flood here. Where was the flood?

DODSON: In North Hollywood and Van Nuys, was it not?

BOYER: Down the Tujunga wash. Do you remember that?

TOMSON: Yes, the damn broke. Oh God, yes.

BOYER: The damn broke. What damn was there?

TOMSON: There is a big damn up there. That held the water. That was so in San Francisco Canyon. You remember about that. God, how long has that been gone?

DODSON: Was that about in 1927, I'm not quiet sure. Does that year sound about right?

TOMSON: I don't know. Let's see, Denny Fisher lived over there. ?...had moved from there. They were in there and they built them a little home over here on the island. And they was so sure that they were so safe. Nothing would ever hurt them up there and this flood started. And my, Al Tomson, was in my Holland. He hauled my Holland around and Al told him. He said,

"There's going to be trouble." My Holland he says,  
"There's something that's going to be terrible."  
Anyway he sat out much as long as he could and there  
was over 300 people was drowned on that. Didn't you...

DODSON: I wasn't sure that the water from that particular damn  
break came down into the valley. Did it?

TOMSON: Oh my god. You know where the Universal here, there's  
a bridge there. Well that's where Bill Fisher has his  
little house up there on the hill and they called me  
and they said, "Ceclia, the water is awful high but  
we're up so high, it'll never get us." And first thing  
that she called back. I had her car, she couldn't  
drive and I took her to the doctor that day. Drove her  
car, had a brand new Oldsmobile and I had it sitting  
out here in front. And hubby said, "Why don't you take  
that home Ceclia?" "I don't know, I'll take it home  
pretty soon to her." I just didn't want to take that  
car home. And first thing you know she called and she  
said, "Ceclia, I want to tell you something. Don't  
bring the car in. She said, "It's washed out our road  
to the garage." "Honey, maybe you're in danger." "Oh  
no," she said, "I'm up here so high." They were up off  
the bank, you know. But the road had been washed out.  
First thing you know she called, she said, "Ceclia,  
everything's gone." That's unfortunate everything.

And so she went out the back way then over to the next street over and she come on back down and my God, she brought her suitcase and you'll never guess what she had in there?

BOYER: What?

TOMSON: She had a pair of panties. And left her money and everything laid there on the dresser. And her diamond rings. And before the house went down though, we got word. And Poppa was here and we had men and they all went over there and come in the back way, the way she went out. And they saved some things over there. They saved...in fact I think there beautiful rug...they live across the street now. Then they bought across the street. The Red Cross gave them a lot and they built a home there. And she had cancer and she had it when she was here. That's why I was taking her for treatments. And then when that wash came down. It took one little old lady. She belonged to the Four Square Gospel and she was up in a tree, hanging up in a tree. And they, "Hang there...hang there, we'll get you." The Water Department, they was trying to get her off of that tree. And she said, "No, God won't take me. Oh God, won't take me." And she said and she sat there. And I had to go down and see this 'cause I heard about it. And it was raining something terrible but I put on my



raincoat and went down. I could see her up there in that tree. Do you know that whole tree went down too. They picked her up down here at the corner of Riverside, where Riverside comes in...that park there. That's where she was, right in there. That's where we got her. And that came from up here. Oh I'd say, maybe six blocks, right up here. And went right on down that wash, you know, under that bridge. It took that whole bridge out. And there was a chicken shack over here, that they sold just chicken dinners and it went down...no, it didn't go down. No, it was pegs. I often think about those houses, if ever a bad earthquake come, wouldn't that be something terrible. Them houses they got as you go up over ? But anyway, that's the only thing that stood there and it was on stilts. Of course, there was nobody there to go in there but that didn't go down, nobody in it.

DODSON: Well now, were you living in this house at the time?

TOMSON: Yes, yes. And they told us to get out. And Al was with the Mulholland and they came by and I said, "Al, what do you say?" And he says, "Ceclia, don't you move unless I call. But if I come through with a whistle, get out and get out quick." And I said, "All right." And oh my lord, I had mud that thick in this floor. It comes out all through my house. They were all worried.



And my sister-in-law, she'd had a few drinks and she loaded up everything and she forgot her shoes. And she had everything loaded in that car. She'd baked a couple three or four loaves of bread, hand baked. And she come up and mother was with us. Mother Tomson was with us, you know. She said, "Well any how, ma'll go with us. Come on ma." And she drug the poor little old soul. She went along with her in the car. I don't know where they went. They couldn't get out 'cause they had everything blocked. And they went some place. Anyway, they had bread and chicken cooked and like beans and God knows what. They wanted me to go along with them too. And I said, "No," I knew Al my Holland knew what they were talking about, see. And he said, "No, don't move Ceclia." We didn't...but it took that whole bridge in there, Universal. Just picture, 63 feet high the water was.

DODSON: 63 feet! That's almost unbelievable.

TOMSON: Yeah, do you know where that bridge is that goes over to Ventura? It's just down here two blocks and over on...that was, a man was washed off of that one.

BOYER: Good grief.

TOMSON: He was standing there, looking at the sites and it took him down. My husband knew him real well. I didn't know him but hubby said he knew him real well. I think he went over there to see and you know, and he was standing looking over the damn and they just took him, washed him out. 60 feet high. It come right down through there, see that. Oh, it was something awful. It was something, terrible. Pianos and everything you could think of. Oh, it just made your heart sick. And I went down with them, then I came back. I couldn't look at it no more. God, it was terrible honey. The beds and everything just tore ? all of that just gone. Water is worse than fire. Don't you think so?

DODSON: Well, from the way you describe it, it must have done more damage than the earthquake did.

TOMSON: Oh yeah, there was 300, I can say 350, now I wouldn't say exactly. But know 300 in something that went down and drowned. And oh honey, that came clear from San Francisce Canyon County. You know where that is? That's way above Saugus, up in that direction. And it's just nothing but mountains. You go over there. They have the Water Department and this enormous big water and that broke through. It rained a couple three days and it just broke through and boy, she come. Oh my...my hubby...of course, my hubby was in the business

then. And he cleaned up wells and oh God, everything was in the wells you know. They come down and they had to clean them out. And some had to drill new ones and it was terrible. And they found a little boy right there where he drilled was 10 years old. They hadn't found him yet. And it just washed him right out of the house. But lots of them was warned. Just thought it wasn't going to get them, you know.

DODSON: Did you get a warning as soon as the damn broke so you had some time or people did have time to get out of the way?

TOMSON: Yes. Well, we did down here. But I doubt close up there. Further on down, when they were called. When Al and Mulholland, they were up there. He drove for Mulholland all the time. And of course Al was pretty tight around them wells too, he drilled them and everything. And he notified, and you know some people wouldn't give in. They was, "Oh, it won't bother us." And they just stayed and went on down. But a lot of them, they got and was saved. They weren't so hard.

BOYER: I would have got out.

TOMSON: Oh God, I would. Yeah, Jesus. In fact I say if anybody comes in and holds me up, I'll say, "Take



anything I've got. Just let me alone." What's the use of giving our lives up for anything? Where a lot of people fight and go on. I took a lady home from the sitters the other day and God darn it, if a man didn't insult her right in the alley. She was going to make a sharp cut to come through up here above the church and she had one of those police whistles. I have one too. You know I've been having nasty calls back here.

DODSON: Oh, that's terrible.

TOMSON: And it is really something. One night it just got to...and I cried. I just felt, why should I be treated like that? But...

DODSON: I think the best thing is to probably have an unlisted telephone number.

TOMSON: Well, yeah, that's a good ? You have some people that comes out here from the east...and they can't get a hold of you.

DODSON: Yes, then your friends can't get a hold of you. That's the problem.

TOMSON: That's right. And so I mentioned it to the cops. They come here to see the Senior Citizen Club quite a bit.



And I tell you, he told us what to look out for. And I said, "Officer, I'd like to ask you something? I have some calls comes at night. 1:00, 2:00, 3:00 in the morning. Filth, what should I do? And he pulled out of his pocket and he says, "Take this police whistle." He says, "Keep it with you wherever you go. If they call you. Just kind of agree with them. Get that whistle and blow it. They'll let you go. They'll never do that again." He says it ruins their hearing for two weeks. Imagine that.

BOYER: I think my mother did that once.

TOMSON: Did see? Yeah.

DODSON: The only thing...if you did that over the telephone, I'd be afraid the guy would call up again and then do it to you. And you'd always be afraid to answer your telephone.

BOYER: I don't think they'd have kind of a problem with it though. I think I heard that before. My mother said that and I haven't heard of anybody calling back.

TOMSON: You know that I haven't no more. And that must have been that same fella did it all the time. And so filthy.

BOYER: They just do it.

TOMSON: Oh so filthy. And I'd say to him, "Mr., I just don't know..." He said, "I know," he says, "You're gonna tell me that your husband is here. I know he's not." Now he knew that my husband is gone. And I said, "Well have more people in the house here. Watch out, you're going get into it." And I'd hang up and he'd ring, and he'd call and he'd call. And every time it'd get a little worse, you know. And then one time he hung up. And when he rang, he said, "You know why I hung up," and then he told me why. And it was just so terrible you know but ever since that cop told me to do that and I haven't a chance to do it. He never called me no more. But I think I scared him the last time. I said, "I'm not alone. I have a son that 6'6" and God darn you, he'd kill you if he see you." I was mad. I don't get mad often but that just got me down. I couldn't take that kind of stuff. You know a man that does that has no respect. He really just don't, he's really just filth, that's all. I don't like that.

DODSON: Would you say that that's a difference between the valley now and the valley say in 1920? That sort of thing wouldn't have happened in '20?

TOMSON: I was so scared to go anywhere. I never was scared. I never locked my house. One time I went clear up to Palmdale and I was with hubby a week and I left the front door open. That's true. But I didn't do it purposely. I just forgot it. But I mean it was open and nobody go in. They just looked...

BOYER: You were lucky.

TOMSON: Yeah, that's true. But then you never was afraid. I wasn't afraid. I'd go down to the store or go anywhere. But now I don't. I don't go out at night at all.

DODSON: When would you say the changes began? At what point do you feel that you did consider it's unsafe to go out at night?

TOMSON: Well, I don't know doc. It's been quite a while. I would say five years.

DODSON: I see. Since about 1970 then perhaps?

TOMSON: It's gotten bad. It's bad. One of our neighbors down here, he went down here at Libby's Drugs. He had two dogs and he was walking them and it was 11:00 at night and two or three Mexicans jumped out of a car and they

just beat that man to a pulp. They had him in the hospital and the dogs run like the dickens, went home. And he says to me...he said when he got out of the hospital...he said, "You know something," he was Irish. He said, "I tell you something...I tell you one thing, I'm going to kill them both. I'm going to shoot 'em." And it had arms like this. Then he says, "I'm built too." They got \$80 from him. And then another one, down in the alley. You see they go to that grocery store there and they pulled him and drug him in there. It was one of the owners. And they took off his clothes and they took his watch and his wallet and locked him in there. And the wife, I know her real well. She said, "Oh Ce, I worried where in the world that man went to. And I went over to the grocery store and I looked." And she said, "I guess he hollered so long that he got horse. He couldn't holler any more." And she said, "? Gee, I believe I'll get the car out and go see if I can find him." And she went to get the car out and there he was locked up in there.

BOYER: In the car?

TOMSON: No, in the garage. They took his suit and his watch and everything he had and even all his credit cards and everything that went with him. So that's been four



years ago. I'd say about five years it's been getting worse. It is bad, though isn't, huh?

DODSON: Everyone we've interviewed has mentioned this that when they first came out or first went to live in the valley, they moved around freely and weren't afraid and now many say they are afraid to go out at night and that sort of thing.

TOMSON: But I think five years ago it started getting worse. As much as right around here. One of our neighbors right down here on the corner, she was going to go to a wedding and it must have been three years ago now and so she...I got a call. She said, "Well mamma, I'll be out early in the morning." And she said it was going to be over here at St. Charles and they were going to go to the mass, you know and then the wedding. And she said the mamma said, "That'd be fine." And when the daughter got out there, there she was choked to death with her stockings. She had laid them over the couch and had her dress and everything there what she was going to wear so they would not be late you know and he killed her with her stockings. He just broke in. You know it's kind of...and here I'm all alone. It worries me. It really does. And I went to work with a fella from Universal, a neighbor across the street. In fact, he lived in this apartment seven years of mine. Mr.

Fisher. And he says, "Ceclia, I think he's alright. I don't want to say for sure but he said, "You..." And the more I thought about it, he was going to take it. He was going to give me \$50 a month. And they could go right through here to go down to Universal see. So I opened the door there. And so I...God, I got to thinking about that and I thought about how many murders are going on and how people come home drunk and I thought and he was a painter and painters usually drink, mostly. I know I had an uncle who drank terribly. I mean Christ...that wasn't exactly that. But painters do drink because they could cut that...something in the paint you know anyway. And I got to thinking about that thing and I called up Bill. He says, "Now mother, why did you want to rent that room." I didn't want to be alone. And he said, "You're going to be worse." And God, I got scared to death. He says, "That young fella, he's 52 years. I wouldn't trust him mother." He says, "He'll come home some night drunk and he might choke you to death." So God, that worried me. And so I called him, he's name was Jim. Jim...? anyway I called him and I said, "Jim you know, I changed my mind. I got grandchildren and they come down here to see me and the first thing you know what's going to happen. I'm going to be in trouble. Then I won't have no place for them to sleep, you know." And he said, "Why don't you tell me, your

scared of me." Just like that. He says, "Mrs. Tomson..."

DODSON: He realized immediately what the problem really was.

TOMSON: Yes he did. Yes he did, I don't blame you Mrs. Tomson. I treat you like a brother but you don't know that." And I said, "Well thank you Jim. But I'd rather not." And you know I kept my trap shut. I didn't want to get nobody in here anymore. You don't even women, they still try to get in. I know that my nephew over in Glendale. He had a women to come in. His mother was 90, ninety years old. And he had to clean the house and darn it, if she didn't almost clean her, everything she had. Yeah, I brought her a lot of nice things over there one day in a sack. Aprons and things she liked, little panties and stuff. To surprise her you know and she never got to see them. There over here, I took 'em out, back way back of the garage and then she went over, she picked them up.

BOYER: How awful.

TOMSON: And you know you're just not safe with nobody any more. Women just as bad as men. So I then I made up my mind...unless I know them very well. I'm just not going to fool with anyone like that any more. But it's



really is bad in the valley. And I guess it's all over that way.

DODSON: Well, of course this is one very sad change from earlier times in the valley. And everybody agrees that this change has taken place. We happened to have a single person we've interviewed that hasn't felt the same way you have about it.

TOMSON: Yeah, it's bad. I'm really scared to tell you the truth. I had a gun when I got hurt. I broke my hand here and I had eleven breaks here and my hip. I fell through one of those glasses. I was out with my sons and he had one of those glasses that goes out in the patio. And it was open all day long, Thanksgiving. And in the evening I started to get ready to go home and my husband was still alive then. And he called me and says, "Honey, I'm getting awful tired," and I said "I'll hurry and kiss Merlin good night." She had went and laid down, she was tired, she had a great big dinner Thanksgiving, you know. So I kissed her and I come running and I hit that glass and I went down. My oh my, nine months of it I had. And that was '71 and I want to tell you something, there's been a terrific change since then. But when I was in the hospital they broke in my house.



BOYER: Did they?

TOMSON: Uh-huh. Poppa had a marvelous revolver that he had drilled a well for a sheriff. Oh, what was one of those old sheriff's name, doggone it, I didn't think I'd ever forget that. Anyway, he give Poppa that revolver. And Poppa had it under his pillow. They took it. They took his shotgun. They his .30/.30 rifle. And they had everything they could load, they took out of here. And poor me, laying there. I was pretty sick you know and they thought they had to take my arm off here and I was really...infection set in. I had a lot of trouble and you can imagine how I felt. Of course one of the neighbors had to break that to me. They shouldn't have never done that.

BOYER: How'd they get in? Do you know?

TOMSON: Yeah, they took my door off.

BOYER: They took the back door off?

TOMSON: Yeah, they took the back door off. Yeah, they took the screws all out and you could just see where... But probably though in the night they had a big dagger. One of those knives that, whatcha call it? Mexicans carry. Those big...

BOYER: Machete.

TOMSON: Yeah, what you squeeze in the jump here. And they forgot that. They left it lay on the washing machine. They took everything that they could grab. Anything of value. Oh boy, it sure hurt. Then ? started ?

DODSON: What would you regard is the most important event that happened here in the valley since you've been here? Is there any one thing that stands out in your mind?

TOMSON: Well, they have those meetings. That's quite interesting. About the valley. They have a meeting once a year down here at the, ? I can't think of the name of that but the citizens all get together and they have that. It's quite a deal. They have different uniforms that they dance. It's Spanish and Chinese, all different uniforms they put on.

BOYER: Where's it at?

TOMSON: Down here, right across from Universal City. Did you never seen one of them. What do they call that dear?

BOYER: Oh that the historical. Wasn't it over there?

TOMSON: I think that's what it is. Yeah.

BOYER: They have a big meeting once a year. That's where they sign the papers. Is at Cahuenga.

TOMSON: Uh-huh. That's very nice. I think that's very interesting too. Everybody in the valley, you know. And an awful lot of people go. I've been there a couple times. I liked that. But I don't know of anything else that would be exciting.

DODSON: At what time of the year is that held?

TOMSON: I'm not sure. You know I think that's coming up soon. It's usually in the fall. I haven't heard anything about it but I was there last year.

BOYER: Call them and see.

TOMSON: I went with one of my friends. It's very interesting. It's very nice. And I think that's awfully nice for the citizens. A lot of people go. Oh, hundreds of people go to that thing. And they come out in different uniforms and they dance and the police and oh all different things you know, singing and they give prizes for the best ones. And it's very nice. I think nice. But I don't know of anything else that's exciting. But I mean for everybody. I mean that's about the nicest things they have out here. I don't

know of anything else. But I wouldn't know what to tell you.

DODSON: Well now, if that's the nicest thing, what do you think was the worse thing that you could recall that happened here?

TOMSON: Oh gosh now, I just don't know. I wouldn't know just what to say.

DODSON: Between floods or earthquakes, crime we've mentioned. Can you think of any other type of disaster that's happened in the valley that affected you?

TOMSON: No. I can't think of anything.

DODSON: Of course, after what we've been saying about the earthquakes, the floods and the crimes, we have quite a list there.

BOYER: When was the last ? flu epidemic? Wasn't that in 1918? Was that after you got out here.

DODSON: Yes, that would have been 1918, 1919. Do you remember that?



TOMSON: I wasn't expected to live at all. I was pregnant with my first baby. My ? Bill is going to be 52 and it must have been 51 years ago and I was just practically dying. There was no hope for me at all. And anybody that was pregnant, there was just no help. And the doctors practically told my husband. But he was in the bed with me and in the morning I was afraid to see if he was still alive and he was afraid to see if I was alive. Both in one room. They me sewed up in one of those vests.

BOYER: Oh, those old fashioned vests. Yeah, I know. Wool vests.

TOMSON: Do you remember them?

BOYER: Oh, I don't remember them but I remember hearing about them.

TOMSON: And they had this Dr. James South and he come over with the mask on and nobody was allowed in that room. And the first thing the doctor said was, "My God, I wish I know where to get some cheap whiskey." He said, "That girl, we might be able to save her if we had some cheap whiskey." And old Al says, "Gee, I know where I can get some." I think he already had a couple of drinks that morning. He says, "I got a Jewish friend and he's

a bootlegger." So he went every day and he got us a quart of whiskey and that's the only thing that saved me. I drank that like water. You know I choked so bad and I was turning black and I was pretty near dead. And the doctor say, he'd feel my pulse, "Oh God, you sure fight hard." And I was pregnant and my baby were...I was seven months along. And "No," he said he had hardly any cases that ever lived through pregnancy. But I lived and my baby died. I lost it the 10th of July, just like it's suppose to come. But it had been dead quite a while. And that wasn't too good for me either. But I was real sick. But I tell that is something. That's why I want to go and have that vaccination.

DODSON: You are going to have it of course, the flu shot?

TOMSON: I'm scared to death of that now so I'm going to go.

BOYER: I've got too.

TOMSON: Honey, that is one of the most terrible things and our cousin had three children and my brother in Los Altos and they up Bill and Bill was a good natured old guy, he said, "Well, I'll put on a mask and go out and help him." He seen them all three die. And the mother. Oh honey, and they couldn't take them out of the house for

four or five days. They had no room for them in the funeral parlors. It was bad.

BOYER: I'm sorry. Excuse me, what was that vest called that you wore. I remember, they sew you into it, right.

TOMSON: Pneumonia vest. That's what it is. Oh it's just tight, honey. Gee, and it itches like something terrible. And they had up here like this and it goes like this. It's real tight and it sews around here.

BOYER: You can't get it off.

TOMSON: You can't get it off. Huh-uh. And God, you want to get it off so bad because you got such a high fever you know.

DODSON: Was the purpose to make you perspire or did it have some medication or what?

TOMSON: Yeah, but you had a window open. He left that window open about so far. He never would go away without opening that window. But he had me so warm. I think it was just that no air would touch me or something.

BOYER: I think they had that for people with pneumonia.

TOMSON: You just choke to death. That's all what you do. You die, you just choke, choke till you die. You had whiskey, that whiskey kept clearing it. If I ever got it and I don't pray but I get my whiskey. That's one thing I'll say.

DODSON: Well if you had that much whiskey you must have been so tipsy you would've have known you were sick, would you?

TOMSON: I didn't know I was living. And I'd say...I just kept coughing and coughing. Strangling, I was fighting for air and I'd reach out and get that bottle and gurgle, gurgle, just like water. And the doctor come, "My God, I don't see how she hangs on but she sure hangs on." But he didn't say nothing about our bootlegger. We was afraid he was going to shut him off or something, you know. We was all quiet but old Al come every morning with that old bottle and it must have been a quart, about that tall. I can see that thing yet. And I'd just reach down and grab that and straight right out of the bottle. Oh you're choking so. I want to tell you folks, I'd advise you to get that shot. What do you think about it doc?

DODSON: Well, I've been a little doubtful as to whether I've wanted the shot or not.



TOMSON: Well, what I went through and I know and how many people. Oh my God. We had a fella that worked for Leff. We was out to a show that night before last, before Poppa...he took down. And he's sitting in the show and he says, "You know, I feel kind of hot." And what was his name now God...it makes me so mad...I can't remember. Anyway, Leff says, "Don't you feel good?" And he's just a young boy, about 26, and Pop was...we all were young. And he said, "I don't know what it is, but I feel kind of faint. I feel kind of chilly." And I said, "Well, maybe we better go home." So we got up out of the show and went home and the next night he was dead.

DODSON: Is that right? It worked that fast?

TOMSON: That fast. And he went just like that. And I went down, I felt so funny. I said to Leff, we was eating super, "Gee, I feel so funny." And I kept going like this you know. It kinda like it branded me you know and I started coughing you know. And he said, "Ceclia, my God, do you think got that..." What was his name? He was a great big tall boy, like my son. A big tall boy and real wonderful. And Poppa said, "Maybe you caught him from him tonight you know." And I got so scared and we went to bed. And I didn't get up the next morning. So I laid there. Laid there two solid

weeks. And there was an old colored mammy...God, bless her heart...lived down...they were real sweet at that time too, you know what I mean. Nowadays, they're getting awful ? but that old soul...she'd make this broth and she'd make it in a little bowl and she had a little hand on it. More like cup. I can see that now and she'd take that and she'd put it on the floor and she'd take a broom and she'd shove it over to my bed and I'd drink that. And she every day, she come for one like that for Poppa and one for me. And that's all we ate. And that little old nigger was so faithful, Emerson. And I never will forget her. And when he was sick, on his death bed, I did the same thing. I wouldn't miss a day that I didn't bring him something. I'd bring him lemon pie, or I bring him a custard. And I bring him rice custard or something. I'd always bring him something to eat. You know I never...I'm that way. You know I didn't care what color they are, they're nice, they're nice. But they were. But nowadays, they'll hunt you down and do that to him. They're getting kind of mean, aren't they? Do you think so, doc?

DODSON: Now I'm doing the interviewing. Your not suppose to ask the questions. I ask the questions.

TOMSON: Now I told them...I said, "Ceclia, ?" No, but there is good ones and there are bad ones.

BOYER: You know when you were talking about the stills. We heard that before. We've had the people say that they had...who would it be...the sheriffs or officers came out to search their property. To see if there was any stills. Do you remember that?

TOMSON: Oh God, yes. I knew some people that did it. Joey, for one. He had a little still in his house. We went out there one day and he said, "You know, you wait a little while and I'll have a nice hot bottle for you." So Pop and I were sitting in their front room and I said, "I smell something Pop. It smells like whiskey, don't it?" He says, "Yeah, Joe what are you doing in that kitchen?" And he says, "Come here and I'll show you." He was making...he's got it on the stove and makes...he had a little still and he made his own whiskey, corn whiskey and he did. Oh know of several of them. And then there's a fella up in Newhall. He had a little house and he lived kind of for himself. He didn't have very much company or anything but he worked for Bill. And so one night Bill went over to get him to come along and work special at night and Bill thought he had a little still going too. A lot of



people had them going. I don't think they do it any more not since the country ? ?

DODSON: Would you say in those days it wasn't considered very much of a crime if an individual had his own house.

TOMSON: 14 years in the pen is all. No, I mean... I didn't mean that, I meant that the public was a little more tolerant of having the still in the house. So many people were doing it.

TOMSON: Yes, they were. There were classy people who was doing that.

DODSON: And it is my understanding that a lot of folks learned how to make wine in those days.

TOMSON: Should I talk about that? My husband brought home some wine. I'll never forget that all my life. I was going to make wine juice, you know. So we put it in a barrel and flattened all out and everything and I put down in the cellar, we have a cellar. So I went out and I forgot the darn stuff. So I had his cousins, it was about four couples came out and I thought to myself, "I wonder how that wine is." You know, it would be nice to treat 'em. And I said, "Poppa, go down and get us a pitcher." And he went down. Got a pitcher and brought



it up and gee it was good. I had a glass and they had a couple of glasses and the first thing you know they started to singing and we all got so god darn happy, one got out and ? You know how happy they were, I think he had more than two glasses because I didn't quite that, but I was happy. And I had a great big ham in the oven, you know, I was trying to bake the son-of-a-gun and I looked at it and I could see it and then I didn't see it. I was feeling pretty good. But I had no idea that stuff would ferment like that. I'll tell you something it was strong. I don't know what percent it was, but I know we was all feeling good. We didn't eat dinner until about 7:00 that night.

DODSON: Well, it would get stronger the longer you let it stay fermented, wouldn't it? It eventually turn into liquor.

TOMSON: I think it was down there for a long time. I was working in this ? and the guy give him a great big bunch of them and I said, let's make some...juice. It was juice alright, I've done it. Everybody, we had about the best party we ever had in our lives. We played poker and oh God, I won \$10 or \$15, I don't know what it was any more. And we played in here and we played in there... "Ceclia, would you like to play poker tonight?" And I said, "Oh sure." I love to play

poker. I play every two weeks, poker. Friendly poker, yes. And I said, "Yes, I would Al." He said, "Well, I'll come by and pick you." And he lives right...in fact, his home is still down there...and his wife...about two houses down. And I said, "Okay." And I said, "You don't mind, Leff?" "Oh go on Cecelia," he didn't like to play cards but I liked it fine. So I went with Al, his brother. And I got over there and they were all Italians. And gee, that kind of hit me funny, all men. I was the only women in there. So Al sat next to me and he said, "All right Cecelia," he's a darling boy. But he did too much to drink, but we didn't ply no drinks while we were playing. And all we played was high and low. Oh, it got so boring you know. We used to play wild cards and a lot of fun. Anyway, I played along with him and it come 1:00 we started to go home and then they come out with the wine. And those Italians...they really make it boy. And I told them, "I'm driving. I don't think I'll have a drink." "Oh, just drink a half a glass." So I did, I had a half of glass to be sociable and old Al had three or four of 'em and he was drunk. That's a fact, I couldn't hardly get him in the car. And I brought him home and ? You know I come on in there and said to Leff, "Gee, Al sure likes to drink that wine." And he said, "Did you have a good time, now." And I said, "Oh

I guess so Leff." I didn't feel too good just being the only lady there. I'm a woman. It was all fun.

DODSON: Now, you mentioned that 14 years in the pen for having a still, would you say that most people didn't feel they were doing much in the way of crime if they drank a glass of wine during prohibition days here in the valley.

TOMSON: Oh no. Wine was all right. It was whiskey they were after. Anybody that made whiskey is the one that they...they claim that it was 14 years. And I believe they would do that more than people do when they kill somebody. Nowadays they only put them in for a couple months and then they get out. That 14 years...that was the crime, I can remember that so well. 14 years, because I know old Joe said, "Don't ever tell nobody," Joe ? And his daddy and my father was a blacksmith in Missouri. And his daddy made the carriages and stuff for the funerals and buggies and my brother Bill, he was paint them. That's what they had in their shop and this is guy come out here and he had his wife and two girls and things got to getting so awful bad and he made him a little still and he sold it too. And he wants sold honey and I some, we didn't want it. But he did, he sold it, he made some money out of that. But he said if he ? don't ever say nothing because it's 14



years if you caught. That's too much for a little whiskey, isn't it, huh?

BOYER: Yeah, I'd say so.

DODSON: I think the law had to do with the amount of alcohol in whatever the drink was that had defined it as intoxicating...it had I think more than one half of one percent.

TOMSON: It was 90 proof. I tell you. Whooo. I know it. Old Joe he did it till he got him a job and then he went to work again. He was a carpenter and everything was so dead and he had two little girls and he made...had a stove. It was the cutest little thing you ever seen, I can see it yet. Had a little spout that would come over you know. And you'd put your cup in there and he gave you a little drink. And put a little 7-up, you know...a little ice. It was funny, though. He treated his friends like that. He said, "Mind, you didn't get caught." But he didn't. Everybody is true blue to him. And just as soon as he got some work he quit. Put it away, broke it up.

DODSON: Do you think there was relief here in the valley when prohibition was repealed? How did the valley stand on that subject?



TOMSON: Well, I think everybody is pretty happy. Yep. There was a lot of people wouldn't pay the price that they had. And I don't know what Al ever did, he never let us pay for it when I was so bad. He bought that stuff and thank God. You know, they're very much against it. They're 7th Day Adventist, no they're not 7th Day Adventist...they're...

DODSON: Mormons?

TOMSON: No, they're Four Square Gospel. And they are terribly against it. And they've lived there 16 years, my renters. And I've always been kind of careful if I...I never...I bet I don't drink three high balls in a year. But if I happen to, Pop comes in and their all drinking...I'll have a drink with them. Especially my son, "Come on, Ma, you know." I just can't say, "No." So I have a drink but anyway, they...oh boy, I'm telling you somethin'. What was the question you asked me?

DODSON: I asked you about the attitude toward the relief of prohibition, if they were happy here in the valley.

TOMSON: I think so. In fact, I know they were. Everybody celebrated, didn't they? Yeah, sure they did. I didn't, but the majority of people did.

BOYER: Do you, I was just wondering...do happen to think or do you know, do you think the valley ever made any mistakes in anything they ever did...like, I have down here like economically or environmentally or politically or did the valley ever make any mistakes?

TOMSON: Oh, I don't think so. The only mistake they ever did, they voted us into the city.

BOYER: Do you think that was a mistake?

TOMSON: Oh, that was a big one. That our property. It took mother's property not mine, but Mother Tomson's. It was sad, honey. It was just down right sad. They just robbed her, that's all. They really did, honey. If they...it wouldn't have been so bad if they hadn't jumped from \$1,000 to \$3,000 from \$100 to \$3,000. That's what they did, I'm telling you the truth. I wouldn't tell you anything I'm not sure of. That is true. But that hurt mother and then God, that wasn't so bad. She had Pop and I...Pop was drilling wells then and Pop had put all his money into that, 'cause you don't get money like you get now for wells but he...we donated everything we got, but the brothers wouldn't do it. They always said, "We won't put in...what was it now?" As much...put in good for bad, that's the way he said it. That's the way he said it.

That's the boys and they wouldn't help. But Pop and I did. We just dumped everything in it. Even we had this thing mortgaged till it was pitiful, trying to hold on to this property. But we couldn't hold on to it.

BOYER: Do you think that happened to a lot of people in there?

TOMSON: Oh my God honey, yes. It ruined people, it just ruined you. And then next year...Lord, then come the street improvement. They widen these streets, these boulevards...wow. The other day I ran across one of the bonds that mother use to pay. She couldn't pay it, we had to borrow from the bank. See, now it all kept going against this place. Just borrowed and borrowed and we couldn't pay 'em. They wanted \$16,000 a crack.

BOYER: Good grief.

TOMSON: Anyway, it was bad. We didn't pay the whole thing at once, we put them in bonds. We had to pay so much every month. But my goodness that was out of the world you know.

DODSON: That's interesting because we've had another jolt on taxes this year with the increase in assessments. Have you felt that you suffered from that?

TOMSON: No. I tell you something. I think it raised about \$100.

DODSON: I see. Many people got a much higher raise than that.

TOMSON: Well, they say that but don't you think a lot of people are lying?

BOYER: Oh I think some people are.

DODSON: Well, I don't know. Mine were more than doubled.

BOYER: Some people weren't paying...

TOMSON: Where is your home at?

DODSON: In La Cresenta.

TOMSON: La Cresenta. Yeah, I know where that is.

DODSON: No, mine went up 118 percent over last year. Which is more than double.

TOMSON: I wonder why they didn't mine, honey. I was listening last year...



BOYER: Some people were paying less than a lot of people were paying already. I know that.

TOMSON: And some people are paying less than they paid last year. I've heard a number of people.

BOYER: Oh really?

TOMSON: Yeah, right here in the valley. And then you turn around and talk to somebody else, that's what made me say that. I wonder if some people just talk, you know. Because this one here was just about \$100 difference. And I pay \$200 a month and of course that what I get...I get \$250 for the apartment upstairs and the same for the apartment down there. And I get \$165 for the single downstairs and then I got this place over here and I get \$64 and he does all the work for me. He takes care of all the grass and in all our apartments and everything. And then I get \$100 for this little guest house and then I have my place here and that isn't so bad. I didn't think. I told them I said if they don't raise mine over \$300, I won't suffer. But they keep coming up it's going to hit me see. Because I don't have nothing...I don't owe a penny on my property.

DODSON: Well, this may be an area that wasn't reassessed.  
Maybe this had it's assessment raised...

TOMSON: Why do I see people around measuring all the time. Can  
you tell me that one? They were here again  
yesterday...no, this morning. Dick told me.

BOYER: They were?

TOMSON: Uh-huh. They measured this morning. No, I don't think  
so.

DODSON: It wouldn't come this year, even if they did.

TOMSON: No, I don't think so. And I'll tell you, people want  
to buy this property. I've had a number and number of  
people. One man come so far as said, "Well, when every  
woman loses their husband, there usually always a  
pressure that they have to sell or get rid of their  
property." And I said, "Well, it didn't have to be  
me." I said, "I didn't want a penny on my property."  
And then they come up with \$125,000 they want to give  
me. And I say, "No, I'm sorry." I like it here. Why  
shouldn't I stay here. You know, I get enough to get  
along on. I'm paying my taxes. My son will come down,  
"Ma, how's everything going?" And of course, he's well  
fixed. He's in good shape. He built one rig himself

and he got \$40,000 for that. And the funniest thing happened. He had a small rig, the kind that I use to run. They came in the yard there...two Mexicans, and they said, "Tom sent me and we'd like to talk to you," and I was there. I was with Bill that day and I stayed all night but in the next morning and these guys came in and I thought, well God, I wonder if they're going to hold us up or something, you know. And he said now, "I want to talk to you." And he sat down at the table, at the dining room table. I was sitting on the other end on a chair. And he said, "That little ? you got out there, I'd like to have that. That little one that goes by itself." And Bill says, "It's not for sale." "I want that rig." He laid down \$17,000 honey, in twenty dollars bills on the table. And says, "You take that under the table." That's so you don't have to pay no income tax under the table.

BOYER: Yeah, right. That's clear.

TOMSON: And Bill stood there and looked at him and says, "Drive out right now." He says, "I know you're an honest man, anything wrong, you'd tell me about that. You got that name." And talked broken you know. And Bill said, "How do you know?" And he says, "I know," he said, "Even Mexico knows you." My God Bill stepped in the President of Mexico's house.



BOYER: Oh really.

TOMSON: I'll tell you how this happened. This is funny. You're going to get a kick out of this one. They had a cock fight and he called me up and he said, "Ma, did you ever see one of them?" And I said, "No, I never I did, Bill?" "You have to come up. Get in your car and come on up, ma." He says, "We're going." And I thought shucks, I don't know what that is. I have to see that, you know. And I got in the car and away I went. We went to this darn thing. And one of those guys is in some way related to the head of Mexico. Is he a mayor or is he...?

DODSON: The President. The President of the Mexican Republic.

TOMSON: Is it the president. Yeah. Well, anyway, they were all going down there. Because I don't go down there with him. Because I think I better stay where I was at. But anyway, he went down and he slept in their home. And the Miriam want to call up the children to see if everything was all right. "Just call her." And he said, "Well, how much is it?" "Oh nothing." The phone belonged to him and he owns half of Mexico, I guess, this guy. And they had a big fight, they had a big fight...rooster fight. The cock fight they called it. And he's bird was worth \$8,000. Well, the bird



that Bill had...Bill bought it when they had that fight. I don't know what Bill give to that thing. But oh gosh, they're so beautiful. Oh, they're beautiful. At the first fight I couldn't hardly stand it, but at the second I got use to it, their so darned mean you don't mind to look at them. They just Meeeeaaaannn...God they just bite something terrible. But anyway, they had a big fight down in Mexico. \$8,000 bird. So he took such a fancy to little Miriam. I have awful sweet daughter-in-law. And Bill, they're both a lot of personality. And God, he laid his hand on big Bill's shoulder and he says, "That's your bird. Get it back to Newhall." Bill said, "I don't want him." He said, "Put him in his box, very careful." \$8,000 bird, he was give it to Bill. Bill said, "I don't want it. Mine's dead. I don't want any more of them." So anyway, it was really cute. But he has Bill so well known down there you know and this guy probably met this fella or somehow or another. But he knew that Bill is pretty good, you know, Bill won't beat you. He said...he likes to give you a good deal. Of course, Bill would never have sold it outright like that but the way he came up there and laid that money down there. And naturally you can bring Bill, that's cash. They never holler. Honey, they were piled up, two piles of bills, it was something to see. Was \$20 bills. And he got in that thing and he drove that off

like he drove it for a long time. They're long you know with the big derrick on it and he put some red flags on it and got in it and away he went. Down to Mexico he went. But isn't that something? I bet he made that back in a couple of weeks. Drilling those wells down there. There's short water down there, you know.

BOYER: Yeah, I'm sure he did. Do you remember when the studios came to Burbank? On to Burbank, well they did come to Burbank, but they are here in North Hollywood too.

TOMSON: That first one down here has been here a long...now I don't know about Warner Bros.

BOYER: Do you remember ever filming around in the area or anything like that?

TOMSON: Well, they take pictures, a couple of them at my place.

BOYER: Did they? Here, I'm did they do it a long time ago too? Do you remember that when they came? But they have shot here around here recently.

TOMSON: They'll come up and they'll say, "Can we take your place for about five minutes?" And I'll say, "Okay,"

and they give me a \$20 bill and then they'd go and then they'd take a picture of it. They had a film right here at the back and give her \$20, my renter and give me \$20. All along everybody said they would, and they didn't go stay here at our place, they just took a picture of it. The ? and sure do pay. I have a little grandson that is going with a little girl and he looks so much like her. He has the same color hair, light in color and about the same height, they could go for twins. He is a twin. But he's going with this little girl and it's been quite a little while so the first thing you know I said to her, "You play in the movies, some time, don't you." "Yes." "Like what do you do?" "Ride horseback." She was bold. I said, "Stevie, isn't that awful." He says, "Mother, I don't know about that." He says, "It drives me crazy but she makes \$400 a shot." \$400 for them. It's dangerous. You either do or you don't.

DODSON: You were mentioned Mexico. That brings up another thing. Do you know anything about civil rights here in the valley? Have there ever been any minority problems in the valley to your knowledge?

TOMSON: No. I know one thing. If they'd turn over some of that medicine down here, it would help a lot of people. You know I have arthritis so bad and here about four



months ago now, a lady was going down and she knew these people. And her and her husband and Blanche told me, "Cecilia, she's got terrible trouble with her hands." Oh, I have such pains that at night I walk the floor, just crazy. And one knee. I don't know, the left knee...it all seems to be on this...more on this left side. Not on the side I broke all the pieces, it's on this other side. See, I'm left handed. I think that's what's done it. And I use to drill holding the rigs and that's hard, you know. For a woman it's quite hard. I enjoyed it and I would be with hubby and that was it. But anyway, so I went down there with them. And you know something really doctor, it's something to see. I'm just going to tell you the plain facts. I never seen so many people from different countries. From New York, from Chicago, from where it gets so cold, you know...

BOYER: Alaska?

TOMSON: Every place. I sat there and I talked to different people that come there. And one woman, she was in a wheelchair. And she said, "Oh my God, that wonderful man, that wonderful man." And I had gotten to him yet. This woman made an appointment for 4:00 for us and come to the little town like before you get into Mexico and we stayed all night and then the next day they went



over. Well she had cancer in both breasts and it had been four years ago and he took the breasts out of them. And they don't show at all, just fine. So she goes back down there and he examines her and he says her fine and gives a little...he gets the vitamins from... Do you want that recorded?

DODSON: We can turn it off if you'd rather have it off?

TOMSON: No, but if you want on, so you got it.

BOYER: Oh no, leave it on. A lot of people go down there.

TOMSON: But what I'm telling you is facts because I know that the United States government don't want it over here but I'll tell you folks?

BOYER: What is this now?

TOMSON: It's a Mexican doctor and they have a cure. One of them for the cancer is in Tijuana, that's for the cancer but the other one is right next to Tijuana is another little place, what do they call that. Anyway, that's where they went and he's for arthritis and that's where we went because I had never been down there and this woman. We go with this couple I went with...so anyway, the first thing you know he said,

"Mrs. Tomson, Ceclia Tomson." And I said, "Yes, sir." And I went in. And his brother sits there. He's got a great big table and he sits and he says, "Your name please?" And I said, "Ceclina Tomson." And he said, "Where do you come from?" And I told him and he says, "What's bothering you?" And I said, "I have arthritis and now I have a slipped disc and it's bad." The doctors don't want to operate on it. But I figure I'm pretty much up in the years and I wear a brace and I just would not let go." Which maybe I'm foolish, and maybe it's best. Because my heart isn't too good, you know. So the first thing you know, the door opens up and here's this other fellow. Real neat, a fine looking Mexican. And he says, "Mrs. Tomson." And he says, "Come here." So I went in. And he said, "You have murmur of the heart, haven't you?" And I said, "Yes." And he had a little machine that would go up and down my back you know. And he says, "It's a bad one." And I said, "Yeah, I know." "And you have the arthritis. Of course, his brother that sits at this desk told him all about that. He give the list to him that I told him about, see. And I said, "Yes." And he said, "I want to take an x-ray of your leg." So I said, "All right." My knee, oh God, I couldn't get in and out of the car. I thought I'd die with that knee. Oh my, it's been going on about three years now and every time Bill come down and he said, "Oh ma, I'll

help you get in." Well, he'd get in and pull me in. I just couldn't bend that leg. So he said, "Take an x-ray." And his little girl come out and she took me in. Well, meantime I would say there was 50 people sitting around this waiting room. Of course, it surprises me because I had never heard of it. I really went, until these people talked about it. So first thing you know, he called me in and he said, "You know, I love that name, Cecilia." See, they're all Catholics, most all the Mexicans are you know. And I said, "Well, thank you. I kind of think it's pretty too. It came from my great grandmother. And then my grandmother had it and then my mother and then me." And he said, "I like that name." And he turned and looked at me right in the face and he says, "Cecilia, I can help you." Meantime, the x-rays came in on my knee. They charged me \$16 for the x-ray and \$15 for the examination and \$17 for the x-ray. And he said, "I can help you." And he says I want to see you in three months. And I want you to go over to that drug store right over here and these people had been there, you see she'd had her breasts taken off down there. They've been there before so they knew where the drug store was and everything. So I went over there. Well, they gave me three kinds of medicines. One, and they all come from Germany or from England. They're vitamins. You've hears of this, haven't you doctor?



DODSON: I've heard of this corporation called Laetrile, I believe that they teach down there.

TOMSON: That's where for the cancer. Did you hear on TV lately that they advise C vitamins for cancer.

DODSON: Yes. I didn't know that they advised it for cancer but I know Dr. Pauling, Dr. Linus Pauling has been talking about vitamin C.

TOMSON: Well anyway, I didn't know anything about it. Well, I went over there to this drug store and honey, there were the finest and the poorest people there. And the poorest people can't afford any more and the finest other people, this one lady came from Chicago, she was in a wheelchair. And she said, "Have you been coming here long?" And I said, "I never have been here." And she said, "Well, I live in the town..." Where's that big hospital in the east? That biggest hospital...

DODSON: In Rochester?

TOMSON: Yes.

DODSON: The Mayo Clinic.



TOMSON: Mayo Clinic. And she said, "I live there, right close to that clinic." And she said, "They have a man that was very bad and they wanted to stop her to come." And he said, "All right if I bring my medicine along." And they said, "No." And they said, "I'm sorry. Well, all we want you to do is operate." And he said, no, he wouldn't go. And she said I knew the wife, this man, and she said I talked to her and she said, "You know, my God, I'd give anything in the world to just to have that man. I know people's been to him and he's so wonderful. So he went...they telegraphed to him and told him to bring his medicine along. And he gets his vitamins from Germany and from England. Now that's what she tells me this. And she was in a wheelchair and she was so bad, she was in bed. And now they got into the wheelchair and she can walk. But she's not too sure of herself so this parents of hers brings her to this place and then they take her out of the train or the bus or whatever is and then they bring her in the wheelchair because she's afraid she might fall but her feet are crippled from this...it must be the crippling kind arthritis or something but she's up and around and they're home and she just thinks that man is just God, that's all. But anyway that's what I witnessed down there.

BOYER: A lot of people go down to get drugs in Tijuana.

TOMSON: Well honey, I can home...now I'm not telling you a lie because I'm not very in favor or it. I didn't want to go down there in the first place but in five days my leg is gone, the pain is gone. I went to church and the first time I could kneel on it, for months, or years. I'd say three years. Now that's true doctor. Whatever they got, it helps you. And I ? and this hand...oh I never had to put gloves on. I put real heavy gloves on every night and I suffer something terrible. I get up and stick them in cold and hot water and go on. And then I wrap them in hot water and ? I can stand in there...do you know anything for that doctor?

DODSON: No. All I hear about are things like either cortisone which is an awfully powerful and strong preparation or something like buffrin or aspirin, which is just a pain killer.

TOMSON: Well, I took that medicine, three pills in the morning. They were white and two little green ones I took three times a day and at night there was three little black ones, I took them. And actually...it was five days, I could walk every where of L.A. That knee, it wasn't the walking. I'm a little bit lame because my leg is shorter or something. I don't know just what it is but my leg didn't hurt no more. I could get in and out of

the car and I just...I was happy I just I was flying and my hands...I didn't have to put no gloves on. They weren't entirely well. I wouldn't say that, but they didn't have that...they had the crawling feeling all the time, but that severe pain was gone. And then the gal called me after three months and they were going down again because her husband has something across his back. He couldn't get his arms up. So he went in before I did...when he came out he's ? I said, "My God, what did they do to you?" I said, "I don't think I care for that." Oh he just laughed. He said, "Oh Tomson, it's terrible. I agree with you." So he went over and sit down and just went like this you know. Well, we got our rooms that night. We stayed all night and then come home the next day and boy the next morning he ? pretty good. Now he's doing wonderful.

BOYER: Oh that's good.

DODSON: Well, have you been down again then since you've had this trouble?

TOMSON: No. So they went down and they called me that they were going to go and she said, "Ceclia, my hubby is either we have live up north and leave our little home or here or else he's going to lose his job and she said he knows of another one and he wants to go to see it.



And I'll call you and let you know when we're going to go. Well, she didn't. She forgot that part of it. But she was with him one night at my back door and Joseph was here and I was, my brother ?, and I was in the little bedroom and the door there and she hollered, she said, "Ceclia, are you home?" "Yeah, what, who is it?" This is Mary Anne. We come to pick you up. We're going down to the doctors to get our prescription filled." And good lord, you have to go yourself because he wants to talk to you and maybe he'll change your medicine or something or your vitamins but that's all I know about it and I didn't get to go because I was in bed. I was looking for her to call me.

BOYER: Yeah, she should have called you.

TOMSON: And she said she'd thought she'd done it. She was trying to help him to get his job and he got it. So she called me afterward and apologized and apologized and she said, "Maybe someone else. I know of people going down there, would you go with someone else." And I said, "Yeah." I didn't want to go down by myself though. You know and my son's so busy and who are you going to get? I got...in that little white jar there doctor, that's where he's at. Water, that's the trouble up there. That's what they got Bill and Bill...



BOYER: What are they going to do, do you know? Pour water.

TOMSON: They're getting water, honey from up some damn or something. They're getting water but sometimes it doesn't seem to fill it you know enough and they got their wells...oh Bill's put down a 100 wells besides my husband had. ? that's what they use ? pumping and Bill's ? pumped 200 gallons a minute.

DODSON: Well, they must have quite a bit of water under the surface then. The water table must be high there.

TOMSON: Yeah, it's high. Of course, they have to hit it.

DODSON: The interview ended somewhat abruptly at this point. As Mrs. Tomson talked about other things, not connected with the history of the San Fernando Valley. You have been listening to an interview with Mrs. Cecelia Tomson. The interview was conducted by Dr. James L. Dodson, Curator of the Los Angeles Valley College Historical Museum and by Ms. Paula Boyer, Field Deputy to Dr. Dodson. The date of the interview, November 10, 1976.